

NAVAL BASE CHARLESTON
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Minutes of 10 August 1999

Live Oak Community Center
2012 Success Street
N. Charleston, SC

RAB Members Attending

Mr. Oliver Addison
Ms. Ann Clark
Mr. Wilburn Gilliard
Mr. Don Harbert
Mr. Tony Hunt
Ms. Jeri Johnson
Ms. Wannetta Mallette
Mr. Lou Mintz
Mr. Henry Shepard
Mr. Dann Spariosu
Mr. Bob Veronee

Guests Attending

Mr. Mihir Mehta	SCDHEC
Mr. Todd Haverkost	EnSafe Inc.
Mr. Tom Fressilli	NAVFAC
Mr. Keith Johns	EnSafe Inc.
Mr. Paul Bergstrand	SCDHEC
Mr. Andrew Wertz	EnSafe Inc.

Mr. Lou Mintz, Community Co-Chair, brought the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Member and audience introductions were made.

Administrative Remarks and Discussion of Last Meeting

Lou Mintz asked for comments on the minutes from the July meeting. Mr. Mintz expressed that the minutes for the July meeting were brief but adequate.

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Mintz noted that he had recently driven by the Chicora Tank Farm and the Charleston Environmental Detachment has done an excellent job there.

Wannetta Mallette inquired on how ownership of the Chicora property

was progressing. Oliver Addison said that a community meeting was scheduled for August 16th, and after that he will be able to report to the RAB members on the ownership transfer. Tony Hunt informed the audience that there was still a bit of contamination that the detachment is still trying to characterize.

Mr. Mintz stated that the community relations subcommittee meeting, held earlier that day, was attended only by Mr. Hunt and himself. The subcommittee is discussing a new fact sheet on how the property is transferred from the Navy to the end user.

Environmental Cleanup Progress Report

Mr. Hunt reported that David Dodds (Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command) had taken a job with the detachment's construction branch. In the interim, Mr. Hunt will be the Remedial Project Manager. He reported that there are some comments to be resolved in the RCRA Facility Investigation reports. These issues should be resolved within a month and a half.

Mr. Hunt noted that Corrective Measures Study reports covering four sites were sent to the RAB members who had requested copies. Jeri Johnson asked to receive those reports also. Two of the sites were in Zone H; solid waste management unit (SWMU) 159 and area of concern (AOC) 653. The two other sites were SWMU 12 and SWMU 38 in Zone A. Mr. Hunt presented a conveyance map that indicates the strategy for the parcel transfer. The different colors on the map indicate the mechanism and expected date of transfer.

SWMU 159 is next to the commissary and has soil contamination from batteries, aluminum, and oils. AOC 653 was the auto rack and paint booth shop. SWMU 32 had lead contaminated soil and SWMU 39 had a large groundwater contamination plume.

The Corrective Measures Study reports contain an evaluation of the contamination and alternatives to clean up these areas. The reports contain data related to cost, ability to protect human health and the environment, ease of implementation, and other criteria used to evaluate the alternatives. The next step is to get the RAB's input into the selection of alternatives for these sites. After receiving the RAB's input, the next step is a Statement of Basis. A Statement of Basis is a document that describes the alternative selected and the rationale behind that decision. After the Statement of Basis is issued, the next step is public comment. Mr. Hunt was considering if a meeting might be necessary before the next RAB meeting to go through these documents and answer questions.

All of the finalized Corrective Measures Study reports are in Building 761 on base, and the public library. These are available, and Mr. Hunt encouraged everyone to review that information.

Mr. Mintz wanted everyone to be aware that the Request for Proposal on an insured, fixed price contract for base cleanup has been sent out. Mr. Mintz suggested slowing down the cleanup process because a new contractor is coming in and may make different recommendations. Mr. Addison asked when the contract was to be awarded. Mr. Hunt said they are expecting the award to take place in December.

Mr. Hunt suggested reviewing a Statement of Basis, providing comments and letting the selection of alternative cleanup go to the new contractor. This idea is open for discussion.

Dann Spariosu (US Environmental Protection Agency) questioned if contractors have expressed a desire to have remedy selection complete so they could provide cost estimates on identified remedies. Mr. Hunt stated that some contractors would like the decision on remedy to be made already (for easier budgeting) and some would rather make that decision themselves (for greater latitude in cost savings). Todd Haverkost (EnSafe Inc.) said that he thought the contractor wanted to see uncertainty reduced in the site characterization. The flexibility to pick and choose a remedy is where the competitiveness comes in. Mr. Mintz commented that they should give all the information available to the contractors and not waste time doing things that might change down the line with the new contractor.

Ms. Mallette wanted to know how long the contractor selection period was. Mr. Hunt said that Phase One proposals, which include their financial capacity and competency, are due August 27th. Two weeks later, three contractors will be selected to submit their price. The government will look at their proposed technology to be used and the long-term liabilities associated with it, the structure of their insurance and indemnification. Phase Two selections will be in December. The start date for the successful contractor will be in December. Government funding should be in place by then.

AOC 607 Progress Report

Andrew Wertz (EnSafe Inc.) presented slides showing the dewatering system in use, which is a pilot treatability study at AOC 607. The first phase is a soil vapor extraction system. However, water must first be removed from the ground before the soil vapor extraction system can be installed, scheduled for sometime next week.

Mr. Wertz said that the dewatering system now in place has an air stripper tower, through which water is pumped to remove the contamination. Water removed from the ground first flows through drums filled with granular activated carbon. These filter contaminants out of the water before it enters a small holding tank.

When water in the tank reaches a certain volume, a float switch kicks on a pump which sends the water to the top of the stripping tower. As the water falls down through the stripping tower, air blows up through it and forces the volatile organic material out of the water, vaporizing the organic material. The water is then pumped into a sanitary sewer drain by an agreement with the City of North Charleston. The groundwater can't be put back into the ground because they're trying to remove water from the site. Mr. Wertz noted that the effects of the rainy season on groundwater levels are minimal.

Weekly samples are taken of the water before it goes to the stripping tower. Periodically, samples are taken from the water after it has gone through the stripping tower. The air that blows through the stripping tower is not recaptured but allowed to escape into the atmosphere. This vapor is also analyzed regularly so that they can quantify what is being emitted into the air. The amount of contaminants in these emissions is below regulatory limits.

Mr. Wertz pointed out that there are 37 well points around the building. Only half of these are turned on at any one time to keep the vacuum pressure in the system.

Regarding safety, Mr. Wertz noted that the power box for the electrical source is always locked and has a danger sign on it with EnSafe's emergency number. This machine runs unmanned 24 hours a day.

The water level in the ground has gone down about two feet in the month the system has been operating. The confining layer of hard soil is about 12 feet down. The well points go down 12 feet. Water levels were initially about four feet below ground surface and now they're six feet down. Under the building the water level is even lower, down to nine feet.

Ms. Mallette wanted to know the reason for the dewatering. Mr. Wertz responded that contamination is in the groundwater. Removing the water from the soil serves two purposes: to "flush" contaminants out of the soil, and lower the water table so the vapor extraction system can work more efficiently.

Mr. Haverkost stated that the water flows first through the carbon tanks which gets rid of most the contamination and the air stripper is really a polishing step. Mr. Wertz advised the carbon filters can be changed periodically. Because this is a short test, however, more filters will probably not be needed. He noted that vendors sometimes take the carbon filters and recycle them.

Mr. Wertz explained that this pilot study will last only two or three months. The pumps will operate until the groundwater level drops to a desired elevation then a soil vapor extraction unit will be installed to suck the vapor out of the soil, which will volatilize the organic compounds.

Questions Submitted by Arthur Pinckney

This will be postponed until Arthur is present. There was discussion about whether the written answers should be handed out to everyone. Mr. Hunt replied that copies of the answers are available.

Comments and Questions

Mr. Mintz remarked that RAB members used to get regular reports from DHEC. Ann Clark replied that nothing interesting has happened all summer.

Mr. Mintz queried Ms. Clark if there are any thoughts on the pending fixed price contract. Ms. Clark replied that DHEC is waiting and watching. It's going to be an adjustment in the way DHEC does business. The contractor will be moving at a faster pace and their monetary awards from the Navy will be based on DHEC's approval of documents. She noted that this will put a lot of pressure on the project.

Mr. Spariosu mentioned that there have been law and policy changes. There are new reforms in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) that are supposed to make the cleanup process move faster. These new changes are geared more toward sites that didn't already have a permit. Some of the changes may allow easier ways to handle waste disposal.

Mr. Spariosu said that the recently passed GPRA law, which calls for rating environmental sites by health-risk priority, is now being implemented. Charleston is a high priority cleanup site. That calls for certain actions to make sure that the groundwater contamination is under control, and any risk from contaminated soil is removed before the year 2005. Mr. Spariosu noted that the detachment's schedule has been way ahead of that.

Mr. Mintz stated that he has seen the cleanup on the plant in Ravenel on 17 South, left hand side, and now the plant looks like Magnolia Gardens. It's a good cleanup job from DHEC and EPA and the rest.

Wilburn Gilliard inquired if there's a projected cleanup completion date. Mr. Hunt responded they're looking for the remedies to be in place by the end of 2001. Even with the most aggressive schedule, it's probably going to be sometime in 2002 or 2003 to get the wells and that sort of thing operating properly and successfully. Mr. Spariosu advised that groundwater remedies can take 20 or 30 years to reduce contamination to the regulatory level. Most of the soil has already been cleaned up and hazards reduced to acceptable levels. The health risks have been minimized.

Mr. Mintz asked when the RDA will be able to take full possession of the base. Henry Shepard replied that they should have it by the year 2003. Mr. Hunt replied that the conveyance map identifies the different phases of transfer. Green areas have no environmental concerns. Blue areas are interim measures or tank removals, just awaiting resolution with regulatory agencies. Yellow areas are long-term remedies that require installation of groundwater monitoring and treatment systems.

Ms. Clark shared a compliment to the RAB. Another RAB is struggling with their communication mechanism, getting information out to the public. The other RAB was impressed with the fact sheets put out by this project.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 12 at 6:00 p.m. at the Live Oak Community Center, 2012 Success Street, North Charleston.

Adjournment

Minutes approved by:

Tony Hunt
Navy Co-Chair

Louis Mintz
Community Co-Chair